3: Imperial Gazetteer G-3 (1889-95) 1909 AV1 Kashmir AV1

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rice crop is generally protected by irrigation. The greatest distress is due to the fall of rain or snow while the rice and maize are ready for harvest. The famine of 1832 was caused by early snow, and was aggravated by the floods which followed. In 1877 rain fell almost continuously for three months, and the old system of collecting revenue in kind prevented cultivators from gathering their crops when opportunity served. Food-grain was not to be had; and when imports were made at the expense of the State, the corrupt officials were the chief persons to profit. It is improbable that such distress can be experienced again, owing to the construction of a cart-road, and the change in the method of collecting revenue.

648

The State is in direct relationship with the Government of India, who is represented by an officer of the Political department, styled the Resident. His head-quarters are at Srīnagar. At Gilgit a Political Agent exercises some degree of supervision over the Wazīr Wazārat, and is directly responsible to the Government of India for the administration of the outlying petty States. A British officer is stationed at Leh to assist in the supervision of Central Asian trade. Political relations.

643

On his accession to the *gaddī* in 1885, the present Mahārājā was entrusted with the administration of the State, aided by two ministers: but in 1887, at his own request, he was relieved from all part in the administration, which was then placed, subject to the control of the Resident, in the hands of a Council consisting of His Highness's brother and two selected officials from the British service. In 1891 the Mahārājā assumed the presidentship of the Council, while his brother, Rājā Sir Amar Singh, K.C.S.I., became vice-president. The Council was abolished in 1905, and its powers were conferred on the chief himself. Under the new arrangements the Mahārājā administers the State. There are three ministers, in charge of the revenue, judicial, and home departments; but business requiring the orders of the Mahārājā is laid before him by the chief minister, Rājā Sir Amar Singh. For some time past the departments of finance, revenue settlement, forests, and public works have been in charge of British officers, whose services have been temporarily placed at the disposal of the Darbār. Administration.

645

The four chief executive officers are: the governor or Hākim-i-Ala of Jammu, the governor of Kashmīr (each aided by a general assistant), the Wazīr Wazārat of Gilgit, and the Wazīr Wazārat of Ladākh.

635

In Jammu there are five districts, each in charge of a Wazīr Wazārat, an official whose average salary is Rs. 250 a month.

635

Under the Wazír Wazárat are *tahsíldárs* and sometimes subdivisional officers. All these officers exercise revenue, civil, and criminal jurisdiction, with regular stages of appeal. In revenue cases the appeal lies to the governor, and from him to the revenue minister. In civil and criminal judicial cases the appeal lies to the Chief Judge of Jammu. From him there is an appeal to the judicial minister, who is virtually the final court, and it is only on rare occasions that an appeal is made from him to the Mahárájá. All death sentences passed by the Chief Judge require the confirmation of the Mahárájá. In 1900–1 there were eighty-one courts of all grades, of which eight exercised criminal jurisdiction only. Although there is a centralized form of government as in British India, the real power rests with the *tahsíldár*, and distance and the absence of easy communications are practically checks on the use or abuse of appeals.

691

Before 1892, when the law of limitation was introduced into Jammu, litigation was not very heavy and the people frequently settled their differences out of court. The improvement in the courts, and the effects of this alteration in the law, are shown by the fact that the number of suits for money or movable property increased from an average of 3,735 during the ten years ending 1890 to 10,766 in the next decade, and was 12,160 in 1900–1. The system of registration for deeds resembles that in British India. In 1900–1 the number of documents registered was 1,348.

674

Crime is not serious in the Jammu province; but there has been an increase in cases of theft, hurt, and mischief, due to the greater activity of the police force, which is being gradually assimilated to the rules and procedure prevailing in British India. In the whole State 17,320 persons were brought to trial in 1900–1, of whom 2,169, or 13 per cent., were convicted.

635

In Kashmír the *tahsíls* in the valley are superintended by the governor himself, while those of the Muzaffarábád district are in charge of a Wazír Wazárat subject to the governor and the Chief Judge, whose offices are in Srinagar.

652 **Finance.**

The finances of the State are immediately controlled by an accountant-general, who for some years has been lent by the British Government. The revenue and expenditure for 1893–6, 1900–1, and 1905–6 are shown in tables at the end of this article (pp. 84–5). In the last year the total revenue was 93 lakhs, the chief items being land revenue (38·9 lakhs), forests (13 lakhs), customs and octroi (9·2 lakhs), and scientific and minor departments (2·2 lakhs). The expenditure of one crore included

practically the whole of the life of the people in different spheres. I shall make an earnest appeal to you to make a response to the command in the spirit in which it has been issued and to try for yourselves whether co-operation is not more fruitful than mere non-co-operation, when you are called upon not merely to pass resolutions. But to recommend definite proposals for the amelioration of your fellow citizens."

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The status of cultivators of land, whose condition was little better than that of serfs before the introduction of Settlement of land, has been improved considerably. The maximum State share of revenue is fixed at 30 per cent. of the gross produce, and suspensions and remissions are granted from time to time. The term of a Settlement has been extended to 40 years. Long before the establishment of the Praja Sabha, His Highness had studied conditions of life in the interior of the State by extensive tours. He had also introduced an effective method of keeping in touch with the rural population through conferences of the representatives of each Tehsil in Jammu and Kashmir held annually at the headquarters of the Government. This form of consultation with popular representatives gave His Highness a more intimate knowledge of the real needs and requirements of the masses. As a result of the representations made at these conferences and the discussions that followed, attention was directed towards the improvement of means of communication in the villages, improvement of livestock, grant of cultivable land as *waste* and provision of more facilities for education and medical relief in the villages. The Agriculturists' Relief Act was enacted, several years before the institution of the Praja Sabha, to protect the agriculturists from the extortion of money-lenders who charged high rates of interest, and was the first of a series of legislations for the protection of the agriculturists. It prescribed the maximum rates of interest and empowered the courts to examine the accounts of a loan and to fix instalments for discharging debts on the basis of the paying capacity of the debtor. Special *edicts* were issued declaring agricultural holdings, livestock, agricultural implements, seeds, etc., as non-attachable for redemption of

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A Trip to Ladakh

and arrived at the Commissioner's camp at Kargil in time for a late breakfast. His party consisted of Mr and Mrs Beech (Beech stood six feet six inches, a giant of a man); Mrs Darrah, whose husband, a great sportsman, was awaiting her in Leh; Jack Phelps and P. H. Church, who were on a long expedition to the district of the Pang Gong Lake, a salt lake 100 miles in length, and the Chang Chenmo, after "ovis ammon" and "ovis poli." I received a hearty welcome and a real good breakfast, which I much enjoyed after my forced march to catch up this party.

Kargil is the capital of a district called Purik, and is inhabited by Mohammedans of the Shiah sect. Colonel Ward mentions a curious custom in connection with the burial of their dead. An aperture is left in the earth over the grave, and a rectangular box of masonry is built over this, with a small door and window. Flour is dropped down on the body; this is done at intervals for a period of three moons. Afterwards the hole above the body is closed, as also the door and window.

That morning the Governor of the Province called on us. He was a Kashmiri Brahman, a little man, but from the size of his lower chest he evidently had done himself well. Captain Trench asked him to show him his statement of grain accounts, as there was a threatened shortage of food that autumn. He had received orders to keep large stores of grain in case of emergencies, the old fort on the hill having been requisitioned for such a purpose. The books were brought, and from them Captain Trench saw that his orders had been faithfully obeyed, and the fort was just bulging with grain, like the Governor's lower chest. Captain Trench was so pleased to hear of the great supplies that he told the Governor he would like to see how he had managed to store so